LOEB · LEE · WILLIAMS
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613 MAY 2003
BATMAN
J.IMLEE 2002
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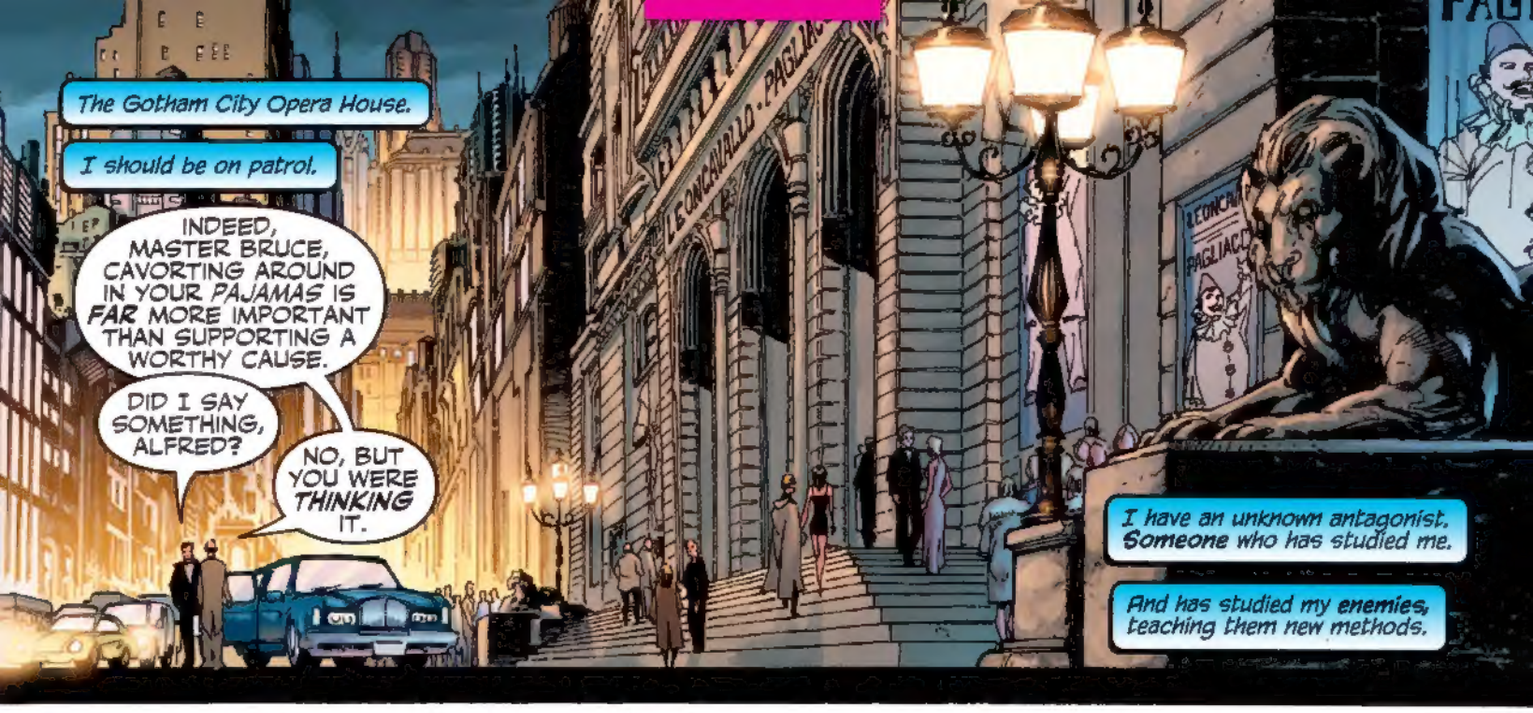
DIRECT SALES
61311
$2.25 US $3.75 CAN
POSTER CHILD FOR CRIME!


The Gotham City Opera House.
I should be on patrol.
INDEED, MASTER BRUCE, CAVORTING AROUND IN YOUR PAJAMAS IS FAR MORE IMPORTANT THAN SUPPORTING A WORTHY CAUSE.
DID I SAY SOMETHING, ALFRED?
NO, BUT YOU WERE THINKING IT.
I have an unknown antagonist. Someone who has studied me.
And has studied my enemies, teaching them new methods.

I'VE PACKED YOUR BELONGINGS.
DO TRY TO MAKE IT AT LEAST UNTIL THE INTERMISSION.
ANYTHING ELSE...?
LUCIUS FOX WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU REGARDING WAYNE TECH BUSINESS--
-- THAT CAN WAIT.
AND SELINA KYLE WILL BE JOINING YOU THIS EVENING.
I TAKE IT THEN THAT THAT WILL NOT WAIT.
My interrogations of Killer Croc, while he was in custody in Gotham, and Poison Ivy have produced little or nothing with regard to my opponent's identity.

It isn't just their silence that I find frustrating. It's the way they are being silent.
SEEN ENOUGH? OR SHOULD I SEND YOU THE CATALOGUE?
As if...
...they were being instructed to do so.

BRUCE! REALLY GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT.
ARE YOU KIDDING, TOMMY? ANY BENEFIT FOR LESLIE AND I'D BE THERE, EVEN IF MY DOCTOR ORDERED ME OTHERWISE.
HA! TONIGHT I'LL MAKE AN EXCEPTION.
I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT YOU KNEW ABOUT THE PARK ROW CLINIC.
GOOD WORK SHOULD BE REWARDED, ESPECIALLY IN THIS CITY.
NOW IF YOU LADIES WILL JOIN US, OUR OPERA BOX AWAITS.
HELLO, LESLIE.
SELINA! YOU LOOK... GRAND.
There is only one thing about my new adversary that I am certain of. He or she has only begun.

The Opera.
Oddly enough, it was my father's passion and not my mother's.
THAT'S IT. BRUCE AND SELINA, AND LESLIE, I'LL SIT WITH YOU. BOY, GIRL, BOY GIRL.
While my father chafed at the idea of literature and cinema being introduced into my life courtesy of my mother --
"What's the use of filling the boy's head with useless imaginary things?" he was apt to say --
-- he had no such reservations when it came to the works of Verdi, Puccini, and especially, Leoncavallo.

There was something about the Opera -- how they often ended in tragedy -- that my father found appealing...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN TOMMY ELLIOT?
I DON'T. ONLY BY REPUTATION. CERTAINLY NOT WELL ENOUGH TO CALL HIM "TOMMY."
A CHILDHOOD NICKNAME. THEN, HOW DID --
-- I GET INVITED? LESLIE AND I ARE OLD FRIENDS. I'M HER DATE.

HUSH, YOU TWO! IT'S STARTING. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO SEPARATE YOU.
OH, THOMAS --
WELL, I DON'T...!

Alfred has told me how my father would even play opera on the Victrola in the operating room.
If the patient died, my father could always say they weren't opera lovers.
I believe that was my father's attempt at humor.

RIDI PAGLIACCIO--
THOOM
The evening is made only more complicated by the inclusion of Selina Kyle.
THOOM
I'VE RUN OUT OF RICE KRISPIES!
While I know that she is also Catwoman, she does not know about my secret.
THOOM
And as Batman and Catwoman -- hidden behind those masks -- we have begun... a romance that Bruce Wayne and Selina do not share..
BRUCE...? THOSE LYRICS...
YES, I KNOW. IT'S AN... ODD PERFORMANCE...
BOOO-HOOO-BOOO-HOOO
RRRIP
HA-HA-HA-HEE-HEE-WOWEY!
RRIPPP
We are... "The stuff of great opera," Alfred has commented.

I made a p... the grave of my parents to rid this city of ... took their lives. By day, I am Bruce Way... philanthropist. At night, criminals, a cow... perstitious lot, call me...
BATMAN
CREATED BY BOB KANE
HUSH
Chapter Six
THE OPERA
Jeph LOEB writes
Jim LEE pencils
Scott WILLIAMS inks
Richard STARKINGS letters
Alex SINCLAIR colors
Bob SCHRECK edits
Morgan DONTANVILLE assistant edits
special thanks to Mark CHIARELLO
OPERA, SCHMOPERA!
Harley Quinn. The Joker's girlfriend.

LADIES AND JERKS! THERE'S BEEN A SLIGHT CHANGE IN TONIGHT'S SHOW.
INSTEADA THE OPERA ROBBIN' YOU FOR SOMETHIN' LIKE A THOUSAND BUCKS A SEAT--
--WE'RE GONNA ROB YOU!
BELIEVE ME, FOLKS, I'VE SEEN IT ALREADY. I'M DOIN' YA A BIG FAVOR!
THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS. I'M CALLING THE POLICE--
DON'TCHA HATE THIS?
YER TRYIN' TO HAVE A NICE NIGHT ON THE TOWN--
-- AND SOME PEANUT BRAIN FERGETS TA TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES AND PAGERS DURING THE PERFORMANCE!
SMASH
My sources had her working out of Metropolis of late, teamed with...
...Poison Ivy.
And with Ivy's capture in Metropolis and subsequent deportation back to Gotham City...

...the lamb was sure to follow.
WELL, IF IT AIN'T ZILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE?!
DON'T TELL ANYBODY, BUT I GET ALL GOOSEBUMPILLY WHEN I'M ROBBIN' THE RICH AND FAMOUS.
HEY, YOU LOOK AWFULLY FAMILIYA, SISTER.
YOU EVER SPEND ANY TIME UP AT ARKHAM ASYLUM?
NO.
TOO BAD. YOU'DA BEEN VERY POPULAR.
YER KIDDIN', RIGHT?
I AIN'T BARGAIN HUNTIN', LADY!
PLEASE. TAKE WHATEVER YOU WANT. JUST DON'T HURT ANYON
YEAH. YEAH. BLAH. BLAH.
NOW, LET'S SEE WHAT WE GOT HERE, MISTER GONNA-DROP-A-DIME-ON-ME.
DON'T YOU DARE--
LISTEN TO YA. LIKE YOU GOT A CHOICE!
OOO. PRETTY.
I recognize that piece. It was a gift from Tommy's mother.

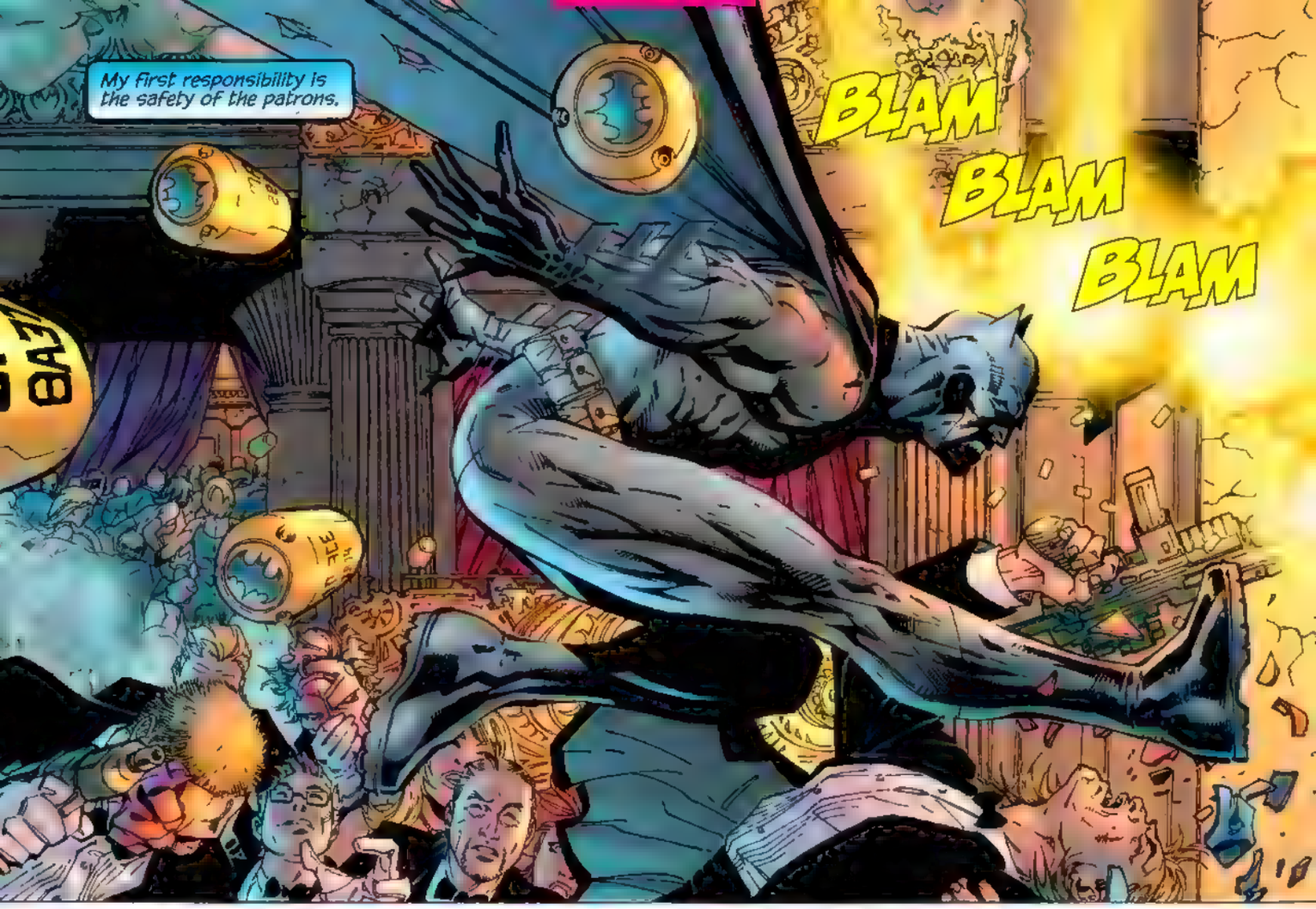
WHAT IS IT, TOMMY?
MY MOM GAVE IT TO ME, BRUCE. IT'S A CIRCLE. THAT MEANS LIFE GOES ON, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
IT LOOKS LIKE A *LIFE SAVER!* I'M GOING TO SWALLOW IT!
GIVE IT *BACK!*
GIVE IT BACK, BRUCE, OR I'LL HURT YOU SO BAD --
HERE! TAKE IT!
I--I'M SORRY, TOMMY. I WAS JUST FOOLING AROUND.
...the jade pendant was very important to Tommy...

NO!
I know something of a Mother's things --
FINDERS KEEPERS--
LOSERS--
EEP.
-- that are taken by a thief in the night...

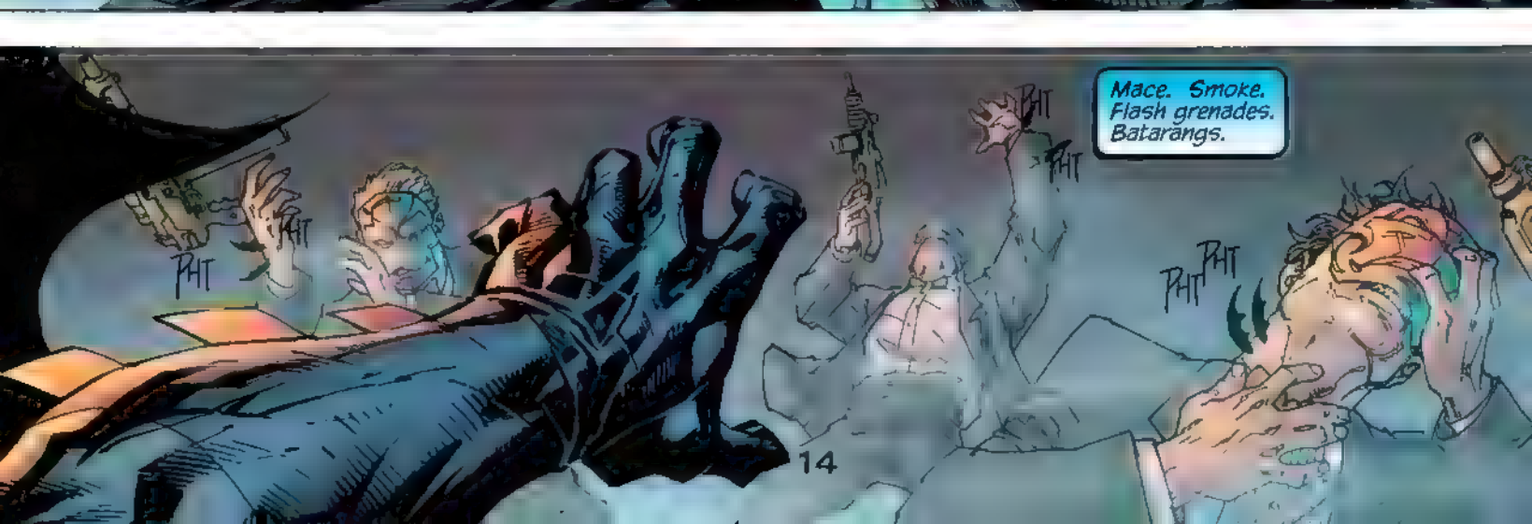
WHATJA
GO AND
PUSH
ME FOR?!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
THAT BAD MAN WANTS TO WRECK ALL OUR FUN!
THAT'S IT, BOYS! BRING DOWN THE HOUSE!
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLA
Once again, my enemies overstep their customary boundaries.
Harley has never tried something this... big.

DOCTOR ELLIOT! GET DOWN, YOU IDIOT!
I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING!
BLAM BLAM
BLAM
BLAMBLAMBLAMBLAM
NO ONE TAKES FROM ME. NO ONE.
BLAMBLAMBLAMBLAMBLAMBLAM
BRUCE! TELL YOUR FRIEND--
--BRUCE..?
I THINK HE WENT OFF TO FIND HELP.
MEN!
WELL, YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LET THEM HAVE ALL THE FUN, ARE YOU?
LESLIE, I CAN'T LEAVE YOU--
OH, POSH. I'VE BEEN THROUGH WORSE.
NOW, I'M SURE YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING IN THAT BLACK BAG OF YOURS BESIDES YOUR WALLET AND LIPSTICK--
--SO, DON'T YOU LET ANYBODY GET HURT.

Alfred will be disappointed.
I didn't make it until the intermission.
BLAM BLAM BLAM
MY BIG OPENING NIGHT, AND LOOK WHO'S TRYIN' TO UPSTAGE ME!


My first responsibility is the safety of the patrons.
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM

As long as the gunmen remain in the orchestra pit, I can keep this contained.


Mace. Smoke. Flash grenades. Batarangs.
PHT
PHT
PHT
PHT
PHT

BLAMBLAMBLAM
TSK. TSK. TSK. MISTER B.
YOU REALLY ONLY KNOW HOW TO STICK TO THE SCRIPT, HUH?
Script? In the past, Harley has been, at best, delusional. But... could this entire robbery be scripted? And for whom?

UGNN...
THUNK
THUNK
I've been... wearing a cowl with Kevlar reinforcement. To protect my skull from my recent head surgery --
-- but, tonight, I insisted I would be fine without it, despite Alfred's concerns.

A LITTLE WORK ON YOUR IMPROV MIGHT DO YA SOME GOOD!
Thought I was stronger. I needed to be stronger. And my enemy takes advantage of my hubris.

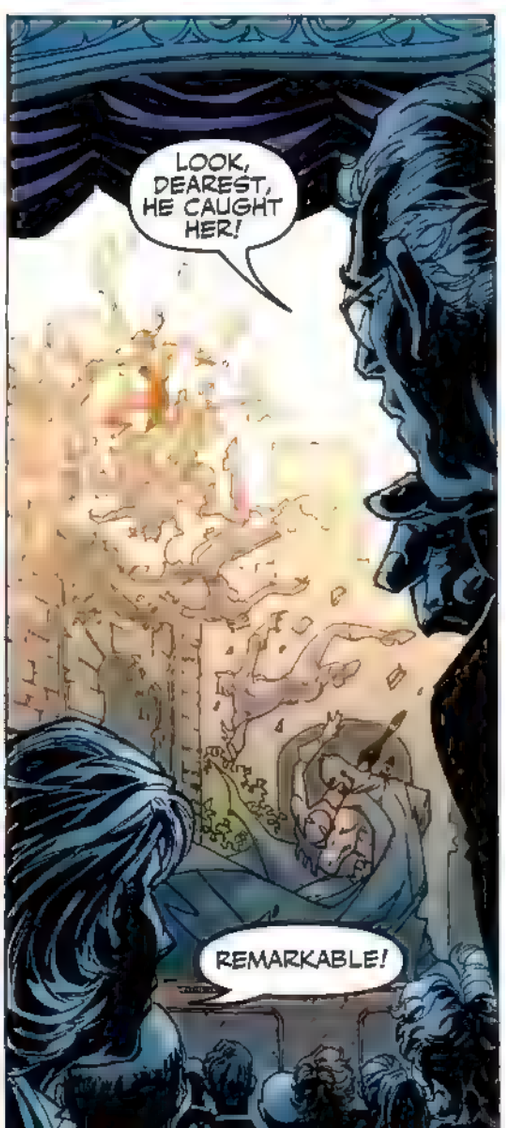
IVY AND I HAD A SWEET THING GOING BEFORE THIS WHOLE MESS GOT STARTED --
-- MAYBE I SHOULD GO OFF-BOOK AND BLOW YOUR BRAINS OUT AND END IT RIGHT NOW!
CHK
Head... spinning... blood...
BADLY CONCEIVED.
BADLY ACTED.
BADLY STAGED.
THE AUDIENCE ACTUALLY WANTS THEIR MONEY BACK.
WOK
GNN-- EVERYBODY'S A CRITIC!

THUD
OH, GREAT -- AN UNDERSTUDY... FOR ROBIN, THE BOY HOSTAGE..
NO.
SMAK
NOT EVER.
KRAK
ZLIK
HEY, IF YOU DON'T WANT THE PART, DON'T PLAY THE PART, CATLADY.

HEAVENS
TO
MURGATROID!
LEFT!
STAGE
EXIT

OR IS THIS STAGE RIGHT?
--GUHH.

GWACIOUS! THESE SEATS ARE VERY DOWN FRONT!
THWACK


LOOK, DEAREST, HE CAUGHT HER!
REMARKABLE!

CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP CLAP
In the insanity of this evening, the audience believes we are part of the show.
BRAVO! BRAVO!
The Opera.
BATMAN...
LIE STILL. YOU NEED MEDICAL ATTENTION.
I KNOW THAT..
..COME CLOSER..
..IF YOU EVER CHOOSE TO.. RESCUE ME AGAIN... OVER CATCHING THE BAD GUY..
..I SWEAR, I'LL SCRATCH YOUR EYES OUT
I'M NOT SOME KID YOU TOOK IN AND TRAINED.
No. She is certainly not some kid.
BATMAN...!
I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER.
YOU GO DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.
Leslie Thompkins. On the night my parents were killed, she reached out to a small boy and gave him comfort in a world where he thought he had none.
She has been doing that very same thing for countless others before and ever since...
FIRST AID

THAT CONCLUDES THIS EVENING'S PERFORMANCE.
MS. QUINN CAN BE NEXT SEEN IN "A CLEAN GETAWAY," WRITTEN BY THE STARLET HERSELF.
I WANT WHAT YOU STOLE FROM ME.
WHUMPH
AND PEOPLE IN ICE WATER WANT HELL--
-- BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE GONNA GET IT.
CHUD
APPLAUSE.
APPLAUSE.
APPLAUSE.
GIVE IT BACK!
Selina's earring. Harley came this way...

KRAKA THOOM
LOADING DOCK A
My head's on fire...
...but after what Harley did to Selina I have to--
BRAK
BANG
No.
NO!

BANG
NOW, THAT'S HOW YOU MAKE AN ENTRANCE!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHE
There was something about the Opera -- how they often ended in tragedy -- that my father found appealing...
TO BE CONTINUED

DC IN DEMAND

03.03

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This Month's Cover by...
JIM LEE, SCOTT WILLIAMS
colored by ALEX SINCLAIR

Next Month in...

Batman #614

What's funnier than eating a knuckle sandwich? Only The Joker knows the answer to that one. Someone will be tasting the pain. This joke isn't funny anymore.

HUMAN DEFENSE CORPS #1 (May 2003) When hostile factions from *beyond* land, sea or air threaten the DC Universe, the U.S. government calls in the HUMAN DEFENSE CORPS – ordinary joes, ten thousand strong, trained for extraordinary combat. Private Montgomery Kelly is just one "boy next door" among the band of brothers fighting alien autocrats and dimensional despots, and writer **Ty Templeton** (BATMAN ADVENTURES) and artists **Clement Sauvé** (JLA/JSA SECRET FILES AND ORIGINS) and **Juan Vlasco** (IMPULSE) want *you* to enlist in this six-issue war series unlike any other!

The Hot List THIS MONTH

H-E-R-O #2

Dial up this exciting second issue of this new ongoing series! Jerry discovers the life of a super-hero isn't all it's cracked up to be... and it may have deadly consequences!

JLA: SCARY MONSTERS #1 (OF 6)

An all-new JLA miniseries! The JLA square off against the ancient spirits that haunt a resort community constructed on an Indian burial ground! Can the JLA avoid being transformed into monsters themselves?

JSA #46

Part 1 of the 5-part "Princes of Darkness" storyline – leading up to the extra-sized issue #50! The Mordru/Obsidian arc begins as the villains launch an assault against Doctor Fate and the JSA!

SMALLVILLE #1

The hit TV show gets its own bimonthly series! On a camping trip Pete pushes Clark to test the limits of his abilities. Also included is an in-depth interview with series star Tom Welling, a visit to the Smallville set, and the first part of an episode guide to the first season!

MADE IN "HONG KONG"

You all know about Japanese manga … but have you ever heard of manhua? These Chinese comics – featuring intense action, swirling swords, and a blend of beautifully painted panels with amazingly rendered black and white linework and computer color – so mesmerized editor Andy Helfer that he has signed legendary Chinese artist Tony Wong on the first-ever Hong Kong-produced graphic novel created specifically for an American audience. Wong and writer Doug Moench collaborate to set Batman on the trail of a deadly group of Hong Kong hackers. The BATMAN: HONG KONG hardcover crosses international waters this summer!

To get more of DC in Demand's Inside Scoop, go to www.dccomics.com/dcindemand right now!

WHERE THERE'S T.H.U.N.D.E.R....

Hot on the heels of our T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS ARCHIVES, we've uncovered the formation of a new team sanctioned to prevent the rise of Alphahumans. The well-known code names of operatives like Lightning, No-Man and Dynamo remain the same; but the faces have changed. Writer Marc Andreyko (*Torso*) teams up with brothers Max and Sebastian Fiumara to kick off the new monthly T.H.U.N.D.E.R. AGENTS series with a boom in June!

KEYS TO "IGNITION"

If you haven't caught up with THE FLASH lately, we've got the fast track on FLASH #201. Writer Geoff Johns has the DCU offices keyed up over "Ignition," a jumping-on arc where the darker, criminal element in Keystone City forces The Fastest Man Alive to get a life – i.e., a new secret identity! Details on who and why are still a blur, but expect Geoff and new artist Alberto Dose (*Spider-Man: Tangled Web*) to keep you up to speed starting in August!

KNIGHT LIGHT

Long has he walked in shadows, but is there a place for the Dark Knight when darkness is banished from his streets? World renowned storytellers the Pander Bros. join forces with co-writer Mark Paniccia (*Bulletproof Monk*) to transform Gotham into a CITY OF LIGHT. The eight – issue miniseries illuminates shelves next Fall.

THE FIRST ONE'S FREE, KID...

The Batman Animated-inspired GOTHAM ADVENTURES may be over, but the adventure continues! Stop by your favorite comics shop Saturday, May 3 for the second annual Free Comic Book Day and get a free copy of BATMAN ADVENTURES #1. For more info, check out www.freecomicbookday.com.

– your MOLE at 1700

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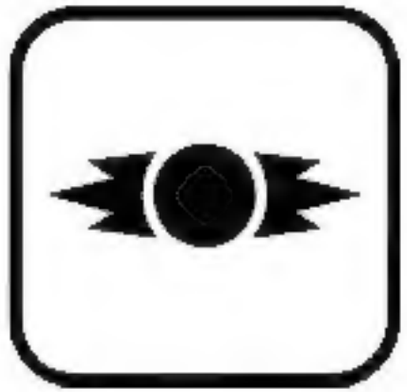

MINUTEMEN
SCANS